

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4, and 5 are presently pending in the application.

Claim 3 has been canceled and the subject matter thereof incorporated into claim 1.

Claim 4 has been amended for clarity. No new matter has been added by these amendments, and entry is respectfully requested.

A new sheet of drawings, including Figs. 1A-1C, has been added as requested by the Examiner. These figures depict sectional views of three embodiments of elliptical polarizers according to the invention, particularly the different layers and their relative arrangements. A new section, Brief Description of the Drawings, has been added, as well as a paragraph describing the new figures. The new drawings and the descriptions are supported in the published specification at least in paragraphs [0017], [0019], [0024], and [0025]. No new matter has been added by these amendments and entry is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 07-261023 ("JP '023"). Claims 3-5 have also been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '023 in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,519,523 of Madokoro et al. ("Madokoro"). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections and the arguments in support thereof as follows, and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections.

Rejection Under § 102(b) Based on JP '023

Regarding claims 1 and 2, the Examiner argues that JP '023 discloses an elliptical polarizer comprising at least a polarizer and an optical anisotropic element which comprises a

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached new sheet of drawings include new Figs. 1A – 1C as requested by the Examiner. These figures depict three embodiments of elliptical polarizers according to the invention.

Attachment: New Sheet

liquid crystalline substance layer with a fixed liquid crystal orientation, a tacky adhesive layer, and a stress blocking layer arranged between the liquid crystalline layer and the tacky adhesive layer. Accordingly, the Examiner concludes that JP '023 anticipates claims 1 and 2. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection as follows. In any event, the rejection is moot, since claim 1 now corresponds to claim 3, which has not been included in this rejection.

The present invention is directed to an elliptical polarizer containing at least a polarizer and an optical anisotropic element. This optical element comprises a liquid crystalline substance layer with a fixed liquid crystal orientation, a tacky adhesive/adhesive layer, and a stress blocking layer having a thickness of 0.3 μm or greater and 40 μm or less and a glass transition temperature (T_g) of 20° C or higher. The stress blocking layer is an optically isotropic transparent layer with particular glass transition temperature and thickness. In contrast, JP '023 describes that element 3, which the Examiner equates with the claimed stress-blocking layer, is a hardened acrylic layer. However, despite the Examiner's assertion that the claimed glass transition temperature is taught in col. 6, lines 20-22 of JP '023, these lines merely describe test conditions used to evaluate samples prepared in JP '023. No glass transition temperature is taught or suggested, and JP '023 does not teach or suggest a stress-blocking layer having the claimed properties. Accordingly, JP '023 does not anticipate the present claims and reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 102(b) rejection based on JP '023 are respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 103(a) Based on JP '023 and Madokoro

Regarding claims 3-5, the Examiner argues that JP '023 discloses an elliptical polarizer having a stress blocking layer with a glass transition temperature of 20° C or higher. The

Examiner acknowledges that JP '023 does not teach that the stress blocking layer has a thickness between 0.3 to 40 μm , and that the thickness of the elliptical polarizer is 450 μm or less for use in a liquid crystal display (LCD) device. However, Madokoro allegedly discloses an elliptical polarizer having a thickness of 450 μm or less for use in an LCD device, in which the elliptical polarizer has a stress blocking layer with a thickness between 0.3 and 40 μm . Therefore, the Examiner concludes that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to utilize such a stress blocking layer in an elliptical polarizer in an LCD device since one would be motivated to reduce attenuation by the relative positioning and thicknesses of the polarization and birefringence components to ultimately provide a field effect mode LCD device with high contrast, good viewing angle, and excellent uniformity. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection as follows.

As previously explained, JP '023 does not teach in col. 6, lines 20-22 a stress blocking layer having a glass transition temperature of 20°C or higher, and is in fact completely silent as to glass transition temperature. Additionally, despite the Examiner's assertion to the contrary, Madokoro does not teach or suggest a stress-blocking layer with a thickness of 0.3 to 40 μm . Rather, Madokoro teaches polycarbonate films, and describes in col. 10, lines 25-32 that the thicknesses of two PC films are 100 μm and 50 μm . Films having thicknesses within the claimed thickness range are not taught or suggested.

Furthermore, Madokoro discloses that the PC films are used as birefringent media for performing optical functions in liquid crystalline devices. Such birefringement materials (which have been subjected to a stretching treatment) are necessarily optically anisotropic, and thus are not optically isotropic transparent layers as are the claimed stress-blocking layers. Such birefringement optically anisotropic layers could not function as stress-blocking layers because

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they would affect the function of the liquid crystalline substance layers in the optical polarizer. Accordingly, since Madokoro does not teach or suggest the claimed stress-blocking layer, even the proposed combination of JP '023 with Madokoro would not teach or suggest all of the claimed elements. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that none of the present claims is rendered obvious by the proposed combination of JP '023 and Madokoro, and reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103(a) rejection are respectfully requested.

In view of the preceding Amendments and Remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are patentably distinct from the prior art of record and in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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(Date)

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WWS/SMK:smk

Enclosures: New Sheet Containing Figs. 1A-1C
Petition for Extension of Time (one month)